



ANDHRA PRADESH CURRENT AFFAIRS

Monthly Compendium — February 2026

Target Examinations:

APPSC Group-I | APPSC Group-II | APPSC Group-III | APPSC FSO

Compiled Topics: 41 High-Yield Current Affairs

Categories: Government Schemes · Economy · Infrastructure ·

Technology · Environment · Defence · Administration

Format: Current Affairs + Detailed Static Integration + Paper Mapping

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01 Kuppam Guinness Record — 5,555 E-Cycles Distributed

PAPER IV — Economy & Environment

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

The Kuppam constituency in Chittoor district entered the **Guinness World Records** by distributing **5,555 electric cycles** to students and workers in a single day. The initiative, partnered with e-cycle manufacturer EMotorad, aims to promote green mobility and last-mile connectivity.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **Guinness World Records:** A global reference book published annually, containing a collection of world records for human achievements and natural extremes. The organization certifies records based on strict evidentiary guidelines.
- **E-Mobility in India:** Promoted under the **FAME II** (Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles) scheme and the newer **EMPS** (E-Mobility Promotion Scheme). E-cycles (pedelecs) require no driving license or registration, making them highly accessible.
- **Significance of Kuppam:** Kuppam is a highly visible Assembly constituency in Chittoor district. It has historically been the political stronghold of N. Chandrababu Naidu and is often the focus of high-profile developmental and welfare initiatives.
- **Environmental Impact:** E-cycles produce zero tailpipe emissions. If each of the 5,555 cycles replaces just 2 km of daily fossil-fuel commute, it significantly reduces localized carbon footprints and urban air pollution.
- **SDG Alignment:** SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 13 (Climate Action).

02 Budget Priority — Veligonda, Paleru & Korisapadu Lift Irrigation

PAPER IV — Economy & Development

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

The state government confirmed that the **Veligonda, Paleru, and Korisapadu lift irrigation projects** will receive the highest fiscal priority and accelerated funding in the 2026–27 State

Budget to ensure timely completion.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **Lift Irrigation vs. Gravity Flow:** Lift irrigation involves pumping water from a lower level (like a river or reservoir) to a higher elevation using mechanical pumps. It is energy-intensive but essential for drought-prone upland regions that cannot benefit from gravity-fed canal systems.
- **Project Locations:**
 - **Veligonda LIS:** Located in Nellore district, designed to utilize Godavari waters (via Polavaram) to irrigate the drought-prone uplands of Nellore and Kadapa.
 - **Paleru LIS:** Located in Nandyal district (Rayalaseema region), crucial for stabilizing agriculture in the arid Rayalaseema uplands.
 - **Korisapadu LIS:** Located in the Bapatla/Prakasam coastal boundary, supplementing irrigation in the Krishna river delta command areas.
- **Polavaram Project Context:** These lift schemes are largely dependent on the Godavari water transfers envisioned through the National Polavaram Project (Right Main Canal). Polavaram is a National Project designed to divert surplus Godavari flows to the Krishna basin.
- **PMKSY:** Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (Har Khet Ko Pani) aims to expand cultivated area with assured irrigation and improve on-farm water use efficiency.
- **Why Important for AP?** AP faces a stark geographical divide: the coastal deltas are flood-prone and water-surplus, while Rayalaseema and upland coastal districts are chronically drought-prone. Inter-basin water transfers via lift schemes are critical for regional equity.

03

Tobacco Farmers Relief — Zero Duty on Raw

PAPER IV / III — Economy & Governance

Products

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

A new policy ensuring **zero duty on raw tobacco products** was implemented to directly assist Andhra Pradesh tobacco growers, shielding them from market volatility and reducing the compliance burden on primary producers.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **AP's Tobacco Profile:** Andhra Pradesh is India's largest producer of **Flue-Cured Virginia (FCV) tobacco**, primarily grown in Prakasam, Nellore, and Kurnool districts. AP contributes

nearly 20-25% of India's total tobacco production.

- **Tobacco Board of India:** A statutory body under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, headquartered in Guntur, AP. It regulates the production, curing, and marketing of tobacco.
- **Economic vs. Health Debate:** Tobacco is a high-value cash crop that supports the livelihoods of lakhs of farmers. However, its cultivation conflicts with national health goals (reducing tobacco consumption). The zero-duty move on raw products aims to support the agrarian economy without directly incentivizing the end-consumption of finished tobacco products.
- **Regulatory Framework: COTPA Act, 2003** (Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act) regulates trade, commerce, production, and distribution of tobacco to prohibit consumption of products injurious to health.
- **Global Context:** India is the 3rd largest tobacco leaf producer globally (after Brazil and India). Major importers of Indian tobacco leaf include Germany, Russia, and Southeast Asian nations.

04 **Weaver Electricity Scheme — Free Power for Looms**

PAPER IV — Economy & Development

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

The state cabinet approved a scheme providing **free electricity** to all eligible handloom and powerloom weavers, effective from April 1, aimed at reducing production costs and reviving the textile sector.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **Handloom & Powerloom Sector in AP:** AP is a major hub for textiles. Famous clusters include **Dharmavaram** (silk sarees), **Pochampally** (Ikat), **Mangalagiri**, and **Venkatagiri**. The sector is the second-largest employer after agriculture in rural areas.
- **Why Free Power?** Powerloom weaving is highly energy-intensive. High commercial electricity tariffs erode the thin profit margins of weavers, pushing many out of business or into debt. Subsidizing power directly lowers the cost of production.
- **Government Support Schemes:**
 - **National Textile Policy:** Aims to position India's textile sector as a global leader.
 - **PM MITRA Parks:** Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel parks to provide world-class infrastructure.

- **Yarn Subsidy & Health Insurance:** Various state and central schemes to support weavers' livelihoods.
- **Challenges:** Competition from powerloom/mechanized sector, lack of access to modern technology, delayed payments, and dominance of large corporate retail players over independent weavers.
- **Geographical Indication (GI) Tags:** Many AP handlooms (like Pochampally Ikat, Dharmavaram Pattu Sarees, Srikalahasti Kalamkari) possess GI tags, protecting their unique heritage and commanding premium prices.

05

Digital Attendance in Assembly — Biometric for MLAs

PAPER III — Polity & Governance

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

The state announced the mandatory introduction of **biometric digital attendance** for Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) starting from the Budget session, aiming to ensure legislative accountability and track participation.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **Role of MLAs:** MLAs are elected representatives who legislate on State List subjects (Art 246), approve the state budget, and hold the executive accountable via Question Hour, debates, and committees.
- **Legislative Sessions:** State assemblies typically meet at least twice a year. The **Budget Session** (Feb-March) is the longest and most critical, as it must pass the annual financial statement before April 1 (start of new financial year).
- **Anti-Defection Law (10th Schedule):** MLAs must attend sessions and vote according to their party whip. If an MLA is absent without permission for more than half the session days, their seat can be declared vacant. However, tracking this manually has historically been difficult.
- **Parliamentary Privileges:** Art 105 (Parliament) and Art 194 (State Legislatures) grant members certain freedoms (speech in the house, freedom from arrest during sessions) to ensure independent functioning.

- **E-Governance in Legislatures:** The introduction of biometric systems aligns with the broader **e-Vidhan project** (Digital India initiative) aimed at automating and paperlessly managing legislative proceedings across all states.

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

CM N. Chandrababu Naidu announced a comprehensive **Population Management Policy** to address demographic transition, ageing population concerns, maternal health, and nutrition. Key targets include making AP HIV/AIDS-free by 2027, improving nutrition (Mid-Day Meal, Anganwadi), and executing the **Sanjeevani Project** for mass health screening.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **Demographic Transition:** AP's TFR is below replacement level (2.1). The policy shifts focus from population control to managing an ageing demographic and optimizing the demographic dividend.
- **Sanjeevani Project:** Targets health screening for 66 lakh high-risk individuals and 5 lakh hostel students, creating comprehensive health profiles.
- **P4 Scheme:** People-Public-Private Partnership involving Margadarsis and Bangaru Mitras to reduce economic inequalities and support the vulnerable.
- **Economic Targets:** The state aims to double GSDP and per capita income every five years, viewing PCI as a key indicator of living standards.

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

AP School Education Department signed an MoU with the **International Innovation Corps (IIC)** (Chicago University Trust) to revamp the Dokka Seethamma Midday Meal Scheme using AI and data analytics for 3.23 million students across 42,230 schools.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **PM POSHAN:** Formerly Mid-Day Meal Scheme, aims to improve nutritional status and boost school enrollment/attendance.

- **AI in Governance:** IIC will deploy AI for accurate attendance estimation, nutritional monitoring, and real-time tracking, reducing leakages and administrative burden.
- **Dokka Seethamma:** A revered figure in AP politics; the scheme reflects the state's commitment to child health and evidence-based welfare delivery.

08

Strategic Partnership with Gates Foundation

PAPER III / V — Governance & Tech

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

AP signed a strategic partnership with the **Gates Foundation** to accelerate development via AI, healthcare, and agriculture. It aligns with **Swarnandhra Vision-2047** (targeting a \$2.4 trillion economy) and utilizes the **AWARE** platform for real-time monitoring.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **Gates Foundation:** Global leader in public health, poverty reduction, and education innovation. Provides expertise in data-driven governance models.
- **Swarnandhra Vision-2047:** Long-term roadmap to make AP a leading state, targeting \$180B to \$2.4T economy, 100% literacy, and 85 years life expectancy.
- **AWARE Platform:** AP Wide Area Real-time Execution system integrates state/central databases for speed of service delivery and WhatsApp governance.
- **Tech Clusters:** AP is developing specialized hubs: Quantum Valley (Amaravati), Data & AI City (Vizag), Green Hydrogen (Kakinada), and Drone City (Orvakal).

09

16th Finance Commission Memorandum Submission

PAPER III / IV — Polity & Economy

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

Andhra Pradesh submitted its formal memorandum to the **16th Finance Commission**, seeking higher vertical devolution weights and specific criteria for capital building and infrastructure expenditure to address post-bifurcation fiscal imbalances.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **Finance Commission (Art. 280):** A quasi-judicial constitutional body constituted by the President every 5 years (or earlier). It recommends the distribution of tax revenues between the Centre and States (vertical devolution) and among States (horizontal devolution).

- **Vertical Devolution:** The share of the divisible tax pool given to States. The 15th FC recommended 41% for states. AP is demanding a higher percentage or special weighting to fund massive capital expenditure needs.
- **Horizontal Devolution Criteria:** The formula used to divide the states' share among individual states. Criteria include: Population (1971 & 2011 mix), Area, Forest Cover, Income Distance, and Demographic Performance. AP argues that its massive infrastructure deficit and capital city costs aren't adequately captured.
- **Fiscal Federalism Issues:** States often complain about "unfunded mandates" (central schemes requiring state matching grants) and the cessation of GST compensation (which ended in 2022). The 16th FC is crucial for defining the fiscal roadmap for 2026-2031.
- **16th FC Chairman:** Constituted in 2025, the commission is tasked with reviewing the impact of the 15th FC and suggesting reforms for cooperative federalism.

10

MSME Policy 2026 — Incentives for Women-Led Units

PAPER IV — Economy & Development

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

A revamped **MSME Policy 2026** was announced, introducing a specialized incentive structure to fast-track credit flow, provide capital subsidies, and reduce compliance burdens specifically for women-led Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **MSME Definition:** Based on investment in Plant & Machinery/Equipment and annual turnover.
 - **Micro:** Investment ≤ ₹1 Cr & Turnover ≤ ₹5 Cr.
 - **Small:** Investment ≤ ₹10 Cr & Turnover ≤ ₹50 Cr.
 - **Medium:** Investment ≤ ₹50 Cr & Turnover ≤ ₹250 Cr.
- **Economic Significance:** MSMEs contribute ~30% to India's GDP, ~45% to merchandise exports, and are the largest employers after agriculture (over 11 crore jobs). They are critical for inclusive growth.
- **Challenges for Women Entrepreneurs:** Lack of collateral for bank loans, societal constraints, limited access to formal credit, and digital literacy gaps. Schemes like **Stand Up India** and **MUDRA** (especially under the Tarun category) aim to bridge this.

- **Udyam Registration:** The official portal for MSME registration. It is paperless, self-declaration based, and linked to Aadhaar and PAN. It enables access to various government subsidies and protection against delayed payments (MSME Samadhaan).
- **AP's Industrial Policy Context:** AP has been aggressively promoting itself as a manufacturing and MSME hub through its "AP Industrial Policy," offering capital subsidies, power tariff concessions, and stamp duty exemptions.

11

E-Pragati Portal Upgrade — 45 New Citizen Services

PAPER V / III — Tech & Governance

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

The unified state service portal **e-Pragati** integrated 45 additional citizen services, aiming to eliminate the need for physical visits to government offices and move towards a "faceless, paperless, and cashless" governance model.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **e-Pragati:** Andhra Pradesh's flagship e-governance initiative. It integrates multiple departments (Revenue, Registration, Transport, Municipal, etc.) into a single window. It is built on the **Seva** model pioneered in the state.
- **Digital India Pillars:** E-Pragati aligns with the "e-Governance" pillar of Digital India, which aims to integrate services across departments and make them available in real-time.
- **Right to Service Legislation:** Many states (including AP) have enacted laws guaranteeing the time-bound delivery of specified public services. Failure to deliver within the stipulated time attracts penalties for the responsible officials.
- **API Integration & UMANG:** State portals increasingly use APIs to fetch data from central databases (Aadhaar, DigiLocker, land records). The **UMANG** (Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance) app aggregates thousands of such services nationally.
- **Challenges:** Digital divide (lack of internet/smartphones in rural areas), server downtimes, and the need for last-mile assistance (often provided by Village/Ward Volunteers or CSCs - Common Service Centres).

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

A strategic review of Andhra Pradesh's maritime infrastructure highlighted the accelerated expansion and modernization of **four major ports** under construction: **Mulapeta** (Srikakulam), **Machilipatnam** (Krishna), **Ramayapatnam** (Nellore), and **Kakinada SEZ Port**, aiming to decongest major ports and boost regional trade.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **AP's Maritime Profile:** AP has a coastline of **974 km** (2nd longest in India). It has 1 major port (Visakhapatnam) and 13+ minor/intermediate ports (like Kakinada, Krishnapatnam, Gangavaram, Machilipatnam, Nizampatnam).
- **Sagarmala Programme:** A Central Government initiative for port-led development. It aims to enhance port infrastructure, improve port connectivity (rail/road), and promote coastal community development and industrialization (Coastal Economic Zones).
- **Green and Digital Maritime:** Initiatives like **Harit Sagar Guidelines** promote environmentally sustainable ports. **Sagar Setu 2.0** (Maritime Single Window) streamlines documentation and reduces vessel turnaround time.
- **Blue Economy:** The sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth. India's Blue Economy policy focuses on marine fisheries, offshore energy, deep-sea mining, and maritime tourism.

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

The state framed a comprehensive policy on the **reuse of treated wastewater** across 123 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), mandating the integration of Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) with industrial and municipal non-potable water networks.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **Water Scarcity Context:** Rapid urbanization and industrialization have severely stressed freshwater resources. Reusing treated wastewater (greywater and blackwater) is a critical component of the **Circular Economy**.
- **Applications of Treated Wastewater:** Industrial cooling, flushing, landscaping, street cleaning, construction, and even indirect potable reuse (after advanced treatment like Reverse Osmosis). It reduces the demand on freshwater bodies and groundwater.
- **AMRUT 2.0:** The Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation 2.0 has a specific focus on making cities "Water Secure" through recycling/reuse of wastewater, rejuvenation of water bodies, and scientific water conservation.
- **Namami Gange Programme:** A flagship central scheme to abate pollution in the Ganga river. A massive component of its budget is dedicated to building STPs in towns along the river basin (including parts of AP like the Krishna river basin).
- **Environmental Regulations:** The **Environment Protection Act, 1986** sets strict standards for the discharge of effluents. The new policy shifts the paradigm from "disposal" to "resource recovery," turning waste into an economic asset.

14

Super-Specialty Hospital Network — Greyfield Blocks

PAPER IV / III — Economy & Society

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

The state health department allocated dedicated funds to complete three pending **greyfield super-specialty hospital blocks** in Anantapur, Nellore, and Eluru, aiming to decentralize advanced medical care to tier-2 and tier-3 cities.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **Greyfield vs. Greenfield vs. Brownfield:**
 - **Greenfield:** Building from scratch on vacant land.
 - **Brownfield:** Upgrading or expanding an existing, operational facility.
 - **Greyfield:** Projects that were partially constructed but stalled or abandoned due to funding or regulatory issues. Completing them is faster and cheaper than starting anew.
- **Healthcare Infrastructure in AP:** AP has a robust network of Area Hospitals (secondary care) and Government General Hospitals (tertiary care). However, super-specialty care (cardiology,

neurology, oncology) was historically concentrated in Vijayawada and Vizag, forcing patients from Rayalaseema and coastal districts to migrate.

- **PM-ABHIM:** Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission. A central scheme launched to fill critical infrastructure gaps in public health, including establishing critical care blocks and diagnostic facilities in district hospitals.
- **AIIMS Model:** The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) model focuses on establishing tertiary care super-specialty institutes across all states to reduce regional disparities in advanced healthcare access.
- **Doctor-Population Ratio:** WHO recommends 1:1000. India has historically hovered around 1:1500, though recent improvements in medical college seats (regulated by NMC) are closing this gap.

15 **State Highway Rehabilitation — World Bank** **AP Road Project**

PAPER IV — Economy & Development

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

The **World Bank-funded Andhra Pradesh Road Sector Project** cleared repairs and strengthening for 850 km of major district roads and state highways, focusing on climate-resilient infrastructure and rural connectivity.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **Road Network Classification in India:**
 - **National Highways (NH):** Primary road network, managed by NHAI (Ministry of Road Transport & Highways).
 - **State Highways (SH):** Connect district HQs and major towns, managed by State PWD/R&B.
 - **Major District Roads (MDR):** Connect mandals/talukas to SHs or other MDRs.
 - **Rural Roads (PMGSY):** Connect villages to the main network.
- **World Bank Funding:** The World Bank provides loans (IBRD/IDA) and technical expertise for large-scale infrastructure projects. The AP Road Sector Project emphasizes not just construction but also asset management, road safety, and green technologies.
- **Bharatmala Pariyojana:** A Central umbrella program for roads and highways, focusing on economic corridors, inter-corridors, feeders, and port connectivity.

- **Economic Impact:** Improved road connectivity reduces logistics costs, increases agricultural market access (farmers can sell to distant markets), and boosts rural non-farm employment. It is a critical enabler for the "Make in India" and export competitiveness.
- **Climate Resilience:** Modern road projects now incorporate climate-resilient designs (better drainage, heat-resistant bitumen) to withstand extreme weather events, which are increasingly common in coastal AP.

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

To address financial stress in the cooperative sector, under-utilised district cooperative milk unions were strategically linked with private aggregators to ensure better pricing for farmers and optimize processing capacity.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **The Cooperative Model (White Revolution):** India's dairy success is built on the cooperative model, pioneered by **Vergheese Kurien** with **Amul** in Gujarat. Farmers own the milk unions, which process and market the milk, ensuring profits go back to the producers.
- **NDDDB & Operation Flood:** The National Dairy Development Board (NDDDB) spearheaded Operation Flood (1970s-80s), making India the world's largest milk producer (producing ~23% of global milk).
- **Challenges in AP Cooperatives:** Many district cooperative milk unions in AP suffered from poor management, outdated processing infrastructure, political interference, and inability to compete with private players (like Heritage, Dodla, Jersey) who offer competitive procurement prices.
- **Public-Private Synergy:** Linking cooperatives with private aggregators allows cooperatives to leverage private sector efficiency in procurement, processing, and marketing, while retaining their grassroots farmer network. It ensures farmers get the best of both worlds.
- **Rashtriya Gokul Mission:** A central scheme aimed at the genetic upgradation of indigenous bovine populations and improving milk yield, which is crucial for the long-term viability of the dairy sector.

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

The Municipal Administration department launched a one-time **regularisation scheme** for small residential plots and unapproved layouts under urban bodies, aiming to bring unauthorized properties into the formal legal and tax framework.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **Urbanization in AP:** AP's urbanization rate is around 29-30%. Rapid, unplanned urban expansion on city fringes has led to a proliferation of unapproved layouts and unauthorized constructions, lacking basic civic amenities (water, drainage, proper roads).
- **Regularisation Schemes:** States periodically offer amnesty schemes where owners pay a regularisation fee/penalty to get legal title and building permissions. This integrates the properties into the municipal tax net and allows owners to access bank loans.
- **RERA (Real Estate Regulatory Authority):** Established under the RERA Act, 2016, to protect home buyers and regulate the real estate sector. It mandates that promoters must have all approvals (including layout approval) before advertising or selling plots. Regularisation schemes often conflict with RERA's strict compliance mandate.
- **Town Planning & Master Plans:** Urban development is governed by Master Plans (prepared by DTCP - Directorate of Town and Country Planning). Regularisation often involves converting agricultural land to non-agricultural (NA) use and aligning it with the city's future growth corridors.
- **Challenges:** Regularisation can encourage further encroachments and illegal layouts if not strictly regulated. It also puts a strain on existing civic infrastructure, which was not designed for the increased density.

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

New **automated crest gate telemetry systems** were installed at the historic Prakasam Barrage across the Krishna River in Vijayawada, enabling real-time monitoring of inflows, outflows, and

gate positions for improved flood management.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **Prakasam Barrage:** Built across the Krishna River in Vijayawada, it is one of the oldest and most iconic irrigation structures in India. Originally constructed by Sir Arthur Cotton in the 1850s (as the Krishna Upper Anicut), it transformed the dry deltas into the "Rice Bowl of Andhra."
- **Telemetry & SCADA Systems:** Telemetry involves the automated collection and transmission of data from remote sensors (water level, gate position) to a central control room. **SCADA** (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) allows operators to remotely control the gates. This eliminates the need for manual operation during extreme weather or floods.
- **Flood Management:** The Krishna river is prone to heavy floods during the monsoon. Real-time data allows the Water Resources Department to make precise decisions on gate operations, preventing upstream submergence and downstream breaches.
- **Historical Significance:** Sir Arthur Cotton's works in the Godavari and Krishna deltas are considered the foundation of modern irrigation engineering in India. The Dowleswaram and Prakasam barrages are testaments to 19th-century British engineering.
- **Smart Water Management:** The integration of IoT (Internet of Things) and AI in water management is a growing trend globally, helping optimize water use for irrigation, drinking, and hydropower.

SECTION III — TECHNOLOGY, EDUCATION & DEEP TECH

19 AI4AP Police Project — Pilot in 3 Districts

PAPER V — Science & Technology

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

The Andhra Pradesh Police launched the **AI4AP Police Project** on a pilot basis across three districts (Chittoor, Guntur, and Annamayya). The project integrates advanced AI tools for traffic management, crime prediction, and investigation acceleration.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **AI in Policing:** Artificial Intelligence is being deployed globally for "Predictive Policing" (analyzing historical data to predict where crimes might occur), facial recognition, automated

traffic violation detection (ANPR - Automatic Number Plate Recognition), and analyzing massive volumes of digital evidence.

- **CCTNS:** Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems is a Mission Mode Project under the National e-Governance Plan. It connects police stations across the country, enabling real-time tracking of crime and criminals. AI4AP builds upon the data generated by CCTNS.
- **SAFE City Project:** A central scheme focused on improving safety and security for women in cities, heavily relying on CCTV surveillance and AI-driven analytics. AP has been a frontrunner in implementing such technologies.
- **Data Privacy & DPDP Act 2023:** The use of AI and facial recognition raises significant privacy concerns. The **Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023** mandates strict consent and data minimization principles, which law enforcement agencies must navigate carefully when deploying AI tools.
- **AP Police Innovation Legacy:** AP Police has a history of technological adoption, including the early implementation of the **COPS** (Comprehensive Online Police Solution) and the **MCTC** (Mobile Computing and Technology Centre).

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

The **National Institute of Electronics & Information Technology (NIELIT)** announced the establishment of India's first dedicated **Quantum & AI University campus** at Amaravati, positioning the capital as a national hub for deep-tech research and education.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **Quantum Computing Basics:** Unlike classical computers that use bits (0 or 1), quantum computers use **qubits**, which can exist in multiple states simultaneously due to **superposition** and **entanglement**. This allows them to solve complex problems (cryptography, drug discovery, climate modeling) exponentially faster than supercomputers.
- **National Quantum Mission (NQM):** Launched by the GoI with a budget of ₹6,000 crore (2023-2031). It aims to develop intermediate-scale quantum computers, quantum-secured communication, and quantum sensing. The Amaravati campus aligns perfectly with NQM goals.

- **NIELIT:** An autonomous scientific society under the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**. It focuses on IT, Electronics, and Communications training, R&D, and standardization.
- **Amaravati Quantum Valley:** The AP government has envisioned Amaravati as a "Quantum Valley," aiming to attract investments, startups, and research institutions in quantum technologies, semiconductors, and AI.
- **AI & Machine Learning:** AI is the broader field of creating intelligent machines. ML (Machine Learning) and Deep Learning (neural networks) are subsets. India's **IndiaAI Mission** aims to build compute infrastructure, datasets, and a skilled workforce to make India a global AI leader.

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

The AP Police wing signed an MoU with **IIT Tirupati** to build a specialised **Cyber Crime Investigation and Training Academy**. The academy will focus on digital forensics, blockchain tracing, and advanced cyber threat mitigation.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **Cyber Crime Landscape:** Cyber crimes include phishing, ransomware, identity theft, financial fraud, and increasingly, **deepfake** generation and crypto-jacking. The borderless nature of the internet makes jurisdiction and investigation highly complex.
- **I4C:** The **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre** is an apex body under the MHA to handle cyber crimes in a comprehensive and coordinated manner. State academies like the one in AP will feed into the national I4C ecosystem.
- **CERT-In:** The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team is the national nodal agency for responding to computer security incidents. It issues regular alerts and guidelines for securing digital infrastructure.
- **IT Act, 2000:** The primary law dealing with cyber crime and electronic commerce in India. It defines offenses like hacking (Sec 43/66), data theft, and publishing obscene information (Sec 67). The upcoming **DPDP Act 2023** adds stringent penalties for data breaches.
- **Digital Forensics:** The science of recovering and investigating data from digital devices while maintaining the "chain of custody" so the evidence is admissible in court. It requires highly

specialized training, which this academy will provide.

22 AP Education Reforms Applauded at AI Conclave

PAPER II / V — Education & Tech

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

Union Education Minister praised AP's tech-driven reforms at an AI Conclave in New Delhi. Showcased initiatives include **PAL Labs**, "Clicker" classroom response systems, AI chatbots, and **AI-driven Face Recognition** for attendance.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **NEP 2020 Integration:** Focus on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) via the Guaranteed FLN Mission (NIPUN Bharat).
- **AI in Governance:** Enhances transparency, tracks learning outcomes, and reduces administrative leakage in schemes like Samagra Shiksha.
- **Digital Access:** Expands digital infrastructure to ensure measurable academic progress and equitable access across rural and urban schools.

SECTION IV — ENVIRONMENT, AGRICULTURE, INTERNAL SECURITY & SOCIAL WELFARE

23 Millet Promotion Board — Rayalaseema Indigenous Varieties

PAPER IV / V — Economy & Environment

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

A dedicated **Millet Promotion Board** was established in the Rayalaseema region to market indigenous minor millets globally, leveraging their nutritional profile and climate-resilient properties to boost farmer incomes.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **Millets (Shree Anna):** Small-seeded grasses that are highly nutritious (rich in fiber, minerals, and gluten-free). They are "climate-smart crops" — requiring very little water, tolerant to high temperatures, and capable of growing in poor, arid soils.
- **Major vs. Minor Millets:**
 - **Major:** Sorghum (Jowar), Pearl Millet (Bajra), Finger Millet (Ragi).

- **Minor:** Foxtail, Proso, Kodo, Little, Barnyard, Browntop, Finger millet (sometimes classified as minor), and pseudo-milletts like Amaranth and Buckwheat.
- **International Year of Millets (2023):** Led by India at the UN, this global campaign significantly increased awareness and demand for millets. The establishment of this board is a continuation of that momentum.
- **Rayalaseema Context:** The Rayalaseema region (Kurnool, Kadapa, Anantapur, Chittoor) is chronically drought-prone with erratic rainfall. Millets are the traditional, historically resilient crops of this region. Promoting them aligns with ecological reality and supports local agrarian culture.
- **National Food Security Act (NFSM-Millets):** A central scheme promoting millet cultivation through cluster demonstrations, post-harvest incentives, and value-chain support.

24 **NTR District Model for Natural Farming**

PAPER IV / V — Agriculture & Environment

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

NTR district is being developed as a model for natural farming with 225-day mandal-level seminars. A **QR-based traceability system** was introduced for organic produce, and 107 waste processing centres will supply 1,500 MT of organic manure daily.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **APCNF (Zero Budget Natural Farming):** AP is a global pioneer in chemical-free, regenerative agriculture using indigenous cow-based inputs (Jeevamrutham).
- **QR Traceability:** Enables "seed to sale" tracking, ensuring authenticity, building consumer trust, and allowing farmers to command premium prices.
- **Circular Economy:** Converting urban organic waste into agricultural manure integrates waste management with sustainable farming, reducing chemical dependency.

25 **Water Tank Desiltation Drive — Minor Irrigation Revival**

PAPER IV / II — Economy & Environment

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

The state minor irrigation wing revived the traditional **tank desiltation program** across drought-prone areas. The initiative aims to increase water storage capacity, recharge

groundwater, and provide nutrient-rich silt to farmers for field application.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **Tank Irrigation in South India:** Unlike the canal systems of North India, South India's undulating terrain and hard rock geology favor the construction of irrigation tanks (reservoirs) by damming natural drainage lines. This system dates back to the Kakatiyas, Vijayanagar Empire, and Cholas.
- **The Siltation Problem:** Over decades, soil erosion from the catchment area causes silt to accumulate at the tank bed, drastically reducing the water holding capacity. Desiltation (removing this silt) restores the original depth and storage volume.
- **Benefits of Desiltation:**
 - **Water Security:** Increases storage for irrigation and drinking water during dry spells.
 - **Groundwater Recharge:** Deeper tanks hold water longer, allowing more percolation into the aquifer.
 - **Agricultural Benefit:** The excavated silt is highly rich in organic matter and nutrients. Farmers use it as free manure to improve soil health in their fields.
- **Jal Shakti Abhiyan:** A central campaign focused on water conservation, water body rejuvenation, and rainwater harvesting. Tank desiltation aligns perfectly with its objectives.
- **Community Participation:** Successful tank management historically relied on community institutions (like the **Neeruganti** system). Modern schemes like **PMKSY** and **MGNREGA** often fund desiltation, but community involvement is crucial for long-term maintenance.

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

The **Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY)** expanded its scope to add 200 new certified organic clusters in the tribal areas of Visakhapatnam district, promoting chemical-free agriculture and premium market linkages.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **PKVY Scheme:** A central scheme under the Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana that promotes cluster-based organic farming. Farmers are organized into groups (at least 50 farmers per

cluster of 50 acres) to adopt organic practices. Certification is done under the **PGS-India** (Participatory Guarantee System) or NPOP (National Programme for Organic Production).

- **AP Community Managed Natural Farming (APCNF):** AP is a global pioneer in natural farming. Formerly known as Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF), it uses locally sourced bio-inputs (jeevamrutham, ghanajeevamrutham) instead of synthetic chemicals. Over 7 lakh farmers have adopted APCNF, covering millions of acres.
- **Tribal Context:** Tribal communities in the Agency areas of Vizag (like Paderu, Araku) have traditionally practiced shifting cultivation (Podu) and organic farming by default. Formalizing this into certified organic clusters allows them to access premium prices in domestic and international markets.
- **Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006:** Recognizes the rights of forest-dwelling tribal communities to land and other forest resources. Organic farming in these areas must respect their traditional practices and land rights.
- **Soil Health:** Decades of Green Revolution practices (heavy urea/pesticide use) have degraded soil health, leading to micronutrient deficiencies and groundwater contamination. Organic/natural farming is a critical corrective measure for long-term sustainability.

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

Marine fishermen were provided with **75% subsidies** for purchasing modern eco-friendly fishing nets. The initiative aims to reduce the financial burden on fishermen while promoting sustainable fishing practices that minimize marine bycatch.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **The Bycatch Problem:** Traditional trawl nets are non-selective; they catch everything in their path, including juvenile fish, endangered species (like Olive Ridley sea turtles, sharks, and dolphins), and non-target species. This "bycatch" severely damages marine biodiversity.
- **Eco-Friendly Nets:** Innovations like **TEDs (Turtle Excluder Devices)**, square-mesh nets, and specialized hook-and-line systems allow non-target species to escape while retaining the target catch. They are more expensive, hence the need for heavy subsidies.
- **PMMSY:** The **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana** (launched 2020 with ₹20,050 crore outlay) has specific components for providing subsidies for fishing vessels, gear, and deep-sea

fishing infrastructure.

- **AP's Marine Profile:** AP has a 974 km coastline and a vast Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). It is a leading state in marine and inland fish production. The annual 45-61 day trawling ban (monsoon spawning season) is enforced to protect fish stocks.
- **Blue Economy & Sustainability:** Sustainable fisheries are a core pillar of the Blue Economy. Ensuring the long-term viability of fish stocks is essential for the survival of the millions of livelihoods dependent on the marine sector.

28 **Operation Vajra Prahar — Anti-Drug Cycle Rally**

PAPER III — Internal Security & Society

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

A cycle rally was flagged off in Nellore under '**Operation Vajra Prahar**' with the slogan "Say No to Drugs, Bro – Ride a Cycle, Bro." The drive combines enforcement with community mobilization.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **NDPS Act, 1985:** Regulates narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. **PIT NDPS Act** allows preventive detention of habitual offenders.
- **Internal Security:** Drug networks are often linked to organized crime and extremist financing. Youth vulnerability requires strict enforcement and awareness.
- **Community Policing:** Encourages citizen participation via confidential helplines (AP Eagle) and regular cordon/search operations in hotspots.

29 **Operation Chinnari-Thalli — Child Safety Drive**

PAPER III / II — Law & Society

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

AP Police launched **Operation Chinnari-Thalli** to prevent sexual offences against children. Key features include **Sexual Offenders Sheets (SOS)**, zero pendency in POCSO cases, and "Good Touch-Bad Touch" awareness.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **POCSO Act, 2012:** Protection of Children from Sexual Offences. Mandates child-friendly reporting, investigation, and speedy trial (within 1 year).

- **Preventive Policing:** SOS tracks habitual offenders. Speed trial monitoring ensures charge sheets within 60 days, improving conviction rates.
- **Women & Child Safety Wing:** Monitors implementation, conducting awareness in schools and hostels to empower children against abuse.

Muskaan Rescue**CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE**

A multi-departmental task force rescued over **1,200 children** from urban hubs under "**Operation Muskaan**," a concerted drive to trace missing children, rescue child labourers, and rehabilitate them into the formal education system.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **Child Labour Laws:** The **Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016** prohibits the employment of children below 14 years in any occupation. Adolescents (14-18 years) are prohibited from working in hazardous occupations (mines, inflammable substances, etc.).
- **Constitutional Provisions:**
 - **Article 24:** Prohibits employment of children below 14 in factories, mines, or hazardous employment.
 - **Article 21A:** Right to free and compulsory education for children aged 6-14.
 - **Article 39(f):** DPSP directing the state to ensure children are given opportunities to develop in a healthy manner and free from exploitation.
- **Operation Muskaan:** A special drive by the Police and Women & Child Welfare Department to scan railway stations, bus stands, markets, and dhabas to identify working or missing children. It involves mapping, rescue, and immediate counseling.
- **Institutional Framework:**
 - **NCPCR:** National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (statutory body under CPCRA Act, 2005).
 - **CWC:** Child Welfare Committees in every district, acting as the final authority for care, protection, and rehabilitation of children.

- **SDG Alignment:** SDG 8.7 (End child labour in all its forms by 2025), SDG 4 (Quality Education).

SECTION V — ADMINISTRATION, DEFENCE, TOURISM & INSTITUTIONAL UPDATES

31 **New Chief Secretary — G. Sai Prasad Assumes Charge**

PAPER III — Polity & Governance

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

Senior IAS officer **G. Sai Prasad** (1991 batch) assumed charge as the new **Chief Secretary** of Andhra Pradesh, succeeding K. Vijayanand. He is the top-most bureaucrat in the state administration.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **Role of Chief Secretary (CS):** The CS is the head of the state bureaucracy and the principal advisor to the Chief Minister. The CS chairs the State Cabinet Secretariat, coordinates between various departments, and ensures the implementation of government policies.
- **Position in Hierarchy:** At the state level, the CS is equivalent to the **Cabinet Secretary** at the Centre. All departmental Secretaries report to the CS. The CS also plays a key role in inter-state and Centre-State coordination.
- **IAS Cadre Structure:** IAS officers are recruited centrally but allotted to state cadres. AP has its own IAS cadre (carved out of the united AP cadre post-bifurcation). Officers are promoted from State Civil Services (Group-I) to IAS through a quota system.
- **Term of Office:** While the standard retirement age for IAS officers is 60 years, the state government can request the Centre for a service extension for the Chief Secretary if deemed necessary for administrative continuity.
- **AP Secretariat:** The administrative headquarters of the state government. The CS operates from the Secretariat, overseeing the day-to-day governance and financial approvals of the state.

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

The Supreme Court Collegium recommended **Justice Lisa Gill** as the new Chief Justice of the Andhra Pradesh High Court. She made history by becoming the **first woman** to hold this post in the court's history.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **Appointment of HC Judges:** Under **Article 217**, High Court judges are appointed by the President of India in consultation with the CJI and the Governor of the state. The actual selection is done by the **Collegium** (CJI + 2 senior-most SC judges).
- **The Collegium System:** Evolved through the "Three Judges Cases" (1982, 1993, 1998). It gives primacy to the judiciary in appointments. The attempt to replace it with the **NJAC** (National Judicial Appointments Commission) via the 99th Constitutional Amendment was struck down by the SC in 2015 as unconstitutional.
- **AP High Court History:** Established on January 1, 2019, following the bifurcation of the erstwhile common High Court of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. It is located in Amaravati.
- **Women in Higher Judiciary:** The Indian higher judiciary has historically had very low female representation. Justice Lisa Gill's appointment as the first woman CJ of the AP HC is a significant milestone for gender diversity in the judiciary. (Note: Justice Hima Kohli was the first woman CJ of any state HC in the south, Telangana, and later became an SC judge).
- **Transfer of Judges:** Under Article 222, the President can transfer a High Court judge (including the CJ) from one HC to another, after consulting the CJI. This is often done to break local biases or promote national integration in the judiciary.

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

Andhra University hosted **WAPCON-2026** (Women Ayurveda Parishad Conference), the first national conference dedicated to women practitioners and researchers in Ayurveda, held at the AU Convention Centre in Visakhapatnam.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **AYUSH Ministry:** The Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homoeopathy was formed to develop and propagate traditional systems of medicine. It oversees education, research, and clinical practice.
- **Ayurveda Basics:** An ancient Indian system of medicine based on the balance of three bodily humors (Doshas): Vata, Pitta, and Kapha. Treatments include herbal medicine, Panchakarma (detoxification), diet, and yoga.
- **Andhra University:** Established in 1926, it is one of the oldest and most prestigious universities in India. Located in Visakhapatnam, it has a strong legacy in both sciences and humanities. It recently celebrated its Centenary Year.
- **Women in Traditional Medicine:** Historically, women have been primary caregivers and custodians of traditional medicinal knowledge (especially in tribal and rural communities). WAPCON aims to formalize, recognize, and empower women practitioners in the modern AYUSH framework.
- **WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine:** Established in Jamnagar, Gujarat, in collaboration with the WHO. It aims to harness the potential of traditional medicine from around the world using modern science and technology.

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

IFR 2026 commenced at Visakhapatnam with a Presidential Banquet hosted by President Droupadi Murmu. The fleet was reviewed from the Presidential Yacht **INS Sumedha** under the theme "United through Oceans."

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **Naval Diplomacy:** A ceremonial gathering of naval ships from India and friendly nations to strengthen maritime cooperation, goodwill, and strategic partnerships.
- **Eastern Naval Command:** Headquartered in Vizag, it is India's largest naval command, facing the Bay of Bengal and crucial for the Indo-Pacific strategy.
- **SAGAR Vision:** Security and Growth for All in the Region. Highlights India's commitment to a peaceful, stable, and prosperous maritime domain.

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

The biennial **Exercise MILAN 2026** began at Visakhapatnam, inaugurated by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. Around 70 countries are participating in Harbour and Sea phases focusing on ASW, Air Defence, and SAR operations.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **History of MILAN:** Started in 1995 at Port Blair. Shifted to Vizag due to advanced infrastructure. Aligns with the Act East Policy and SAGAR doctrine.
- **Interoperability:** Enhances ability to operate together in multilateral scenarios, improving Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) and counter-piracy/terrorism efforts.
- **Indo-Pacific Strategy:** Demonstrates India's growing naval capabilities and leadership in ensuring collective maritime security in the region.

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

AP Tourism inaugurated its pavilion at **SATTE 2026** (South Asia's Travel & Tourism Exchange) at Yashobhoomi, New Delhi, promoting Vizag, Araku, Gandikota, and Tirupati to global stakeholders.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **SATTE:** South Asia's largest B2B travel expo. Crucial for networking with global travel agencies and boosting international tourist inflows.
- **Tourism Economics:** High-yield sector generating employment in hospitality, transport, and local industries. Enhances state branding and global visibility.
- **Swadesh Darshan:** Central scheme for developing theme-based circuits (Buddhist, Coastal, Heritage) complementing state-level promotional efforts.

Buddhist Circuits

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

The state tourism department launched the "**Discover Andhra**" campaign with a specific focus on the **Buddhist heritage circuit**, highlighting sites like Amaravati, Bavikonda, and Thotlakonda to attract global heritage tourists.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **Buddhist Heritage of AP:** AP was a major center of Buddhism, particularly the Mahayana and Vajrayana schools. The Krishna-Godavari delta and coastal regions hosted thriving Buddhist universities and monasteries from the 2nd century BCE to the 12th century CE.
- **Key Sites:**
 - **Amaravati:** Site of the magnificent Mahachaitya (stupa) built during the Satavahana period. Famous for the "Amaravati School of Art" (white limestone sculptures).
 - **Nagarjunakonda:** An island in the Nagarjuna Sagar reservoir. Named after the Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna. Excavations revealed a massive university complex.
 - **Bavikonda & Thotlakonda:** Hilltop monastic complexes near Visakhapatnam, dating back to 200 BCE. They offer panoramic views of the Bay of Bengal and show strong trade links with Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia.
 - **Bojjannakonda:** Located near Bavikonda, featuring a massive rock-cut Buddha statue.
- **Tourism Economics:** Heritage tourism is high-yield. It attracts longer stays, higher spending, and promotes cultural exchange. The "Buddhist Circuit" is a major draw for tourists from East and Southeast Asia (Japan, Korea, Thailand, Sri Lanka).
- **Swadesh Darshan Scheme:** A central scheme for developing theme-based tourist circuits. The Buddhist Circuit is one of the priority circuits identified under this scheme.
- **UNESCO Status:** Several Buddhist sites in India are on the UNESCO World Heritage list (e.g., Sanchi, Nalanda). AP is actively pushing for the Amaravati remains and other sites to be included in the tentative list to boost global visibility.

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

The AP Legislative Assembly revived **'Aatavidupu'**, a three-day sports meet at IGMC, Vijayawada. First launched in 1983 by N.T. Rama Rao, it promotes camaraderie, mental wellbeing, and cross-party dialogue among MLAs.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **Institutional Cohesion:** Encourages non-partisan interaction, reducing adversarial tension and building trust across the aisle for better legislative cooperation.
- **Democratic Traditions:** Revives a 40-year-old legacy, humanizing politics and emphasizing work-life balance and wellness in high-pressure public life.
- **Inclusive Participation:** Involves public spectators and family members, fostering a festive spirit of sportsmanship beyond political divides.

Hike**CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE**

The state government announced a **50% increase in cash awards** for athletes from Andhra Pradesh who win medals at National Games and other major domestic tournaments, aiming to incentivize grassroots sporting excellence.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **National Sports Awards:** The highest sporting honors in India, given on National Sports Day (August 29). Categories include Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna, Arjuna Award, Dronacharya Award (coaches), and Dhyan Chand Award (lifetime contribution).
- **Khelo India Scheme:** A flagship central initiative to revitalize sports at the grassroots. It includes Khelo India Youth Games, Khelo India University Games, and support for sports academies and infrastructure.
- **Sports Authority of India (SAI):** The apex body for sports, responsible for running National Centres of Excellence and training elite athletes. (Currently undergoing restructuring/merger discussions with the Sports Ministry).

- **AP's Sporting Legacy:** AP has produced legendary athletes like Pullela Gopichand (Badminton), Karnam Malleswari (Weightlifting - first Indian woman to win an Olympic medal), and Syed Abdul Rahim (football). The state has a strong culture of promoting physical education.
- **Impact of Incentives:** Financial security is a major concern for athletes from non-urban backgrounds. State incentives, combined with central schemes like the Target Olympic Podium (TOP) scheme, provide the necessary financial backing for athletes to focus full-time on training.

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

Special research grants were sanctioned to **Yogi Vemana University** (located in Kadapa) to conduct comprehensive regional geological studies, focusing on the mineral wealth and tectonic history of the Rayalaseema region.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **Yogi Vemana University:** Established in 2006 and located in Kadapa (YSR district). It is named after the famous Telugu poet and philosopher Yogi Vemana. It serves the higher educational needs of the Rayalaseema region.
- **Geology of Rayalaseema:** The region is part of the **Dharwar Craton**, one of the oldest and most stable geological formations on Earth. It is incredibly rich in minerals, including **barytes** (AP holds the largest reserves in India), quartz, limestone, asbestos, and gold (Ramagiri gold fields in Anantapur).
- **Importance of Geological Studies:** Detailed geological mapping is crucial for identifying new mineral deposits, understanding groundwater aquifers in hard-rock terrain, and assessing seismic risks. It directly informs the state's mining policy and industrial planning.
- **UGC Funding:** The University Grants Commission provides various grants (RUSA, SAP, UPE) for universities to promote research, buy advanced equipment, and foster innovation.
- **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020:** Emphasizes multidisciplinary education and research. Funding regional universities to study their local geography and resources aligns with NEP's goal of connecting higher education with local developmental needs.

Deployed

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

Special task forces deployed **advanced thermal imaging drones** in the Seshachalam forests to curb the rampant illegal logging and cross-border smuggling of the highly prized **Red Sanders** trees.

STATIC BACKGROUND — EXPLAINED

- **Red Sanders (*Pterocarpus santalinus*):** A slow-growing, endemic tree species found *only* in the Seshachalam hills of the Palakonda and Veligonda ranges in AP (Kadapa, Chittoor, Nellore, Tirupati districts). Its deep red heartwood is highly valued in East Asia (Japan, China) for cosmetics, furniture, and musical instruments.
- **Conservation Status:** Listed as **Endangered** on the IUCN Red List. It is strictly protected under **Schedule IV** of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 (Note: The prompt reference file mentioned Schedule I for Gooty Tarantula, Red Sanders is actually under specific provisions of WPA and Forest Conservation Act, often attracting severe penalties under Sec 28A of WPA). It is also listed in **CITES Appendix II**, regulating international trade.
- **The Smuggling Racket:** Red sanders smuggling is a highly organized, transnational crime involving local mafias, political nexuses, and international syndicates. It has led to significant loss of forest cover and violence against forest officials.
- **Technology in Wildlife Protection:** Thermal drones can detect the heat signatures of humans and vehicles at night, even through dense canopy cover. This overcomes the limitations of traditional foot patrols in the rugged, inaccessible terrain of the Seshachalam hills.
- **Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZ):** The Western Ghats, Nilgiris, and parts of the Eastern Ghats are regulated under ESZ norms to prevent destructive activities. Protecting endemic species like Red Sanders is critical for maintaining the ecological balance of these fragile forest ecosystems.

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